

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Amend the paragraph beginning on Page 4, Line 14 as follows:

As shown in Fig. 4, there is a cylindrical, annular void or space 80 between the interior surface 82 of the caster housing 18 and the exterior surface 84 of the spacer 66. The undesirable fluttering or oscillation of the caster wheel 14 involves a rapid oscillatory rotation of the caster stem or bolt 48 about the axis 56. In order to eliminate or reduce the fluttering or oscillation of the caster wheel 14 it is necessary to dampen or retard the rotation of the bolt 48 with respect to the housing 18. One method of accomplishing this is to position a damping insert within the annular space 80, where the damping insert applies pressure or a biasing force between the spacer 66 and the housing 18. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the damping insert comprises a plurality of generally stiff but somewhat flexible discs 88. It can be seen in Fig. 3 that the discs 88 are substantially flat, with major faces oriented substantially vertically. The discs 88 are sufficiently stiff so that they resist bending. When the discs 88 are inserted into the annular space 80 their horizontal dimension exceeds the maximum chord length within the annular space, and the discs must be bent in order to fit into the space, as shown in Fig. 4. This bending creates a biasing force between the rotatable spacer 66 and the non rotating housing 18, and the biasing force dampens the rotation of the spacer 66 and the bolt 48 with respect to the housing.

Amend the paragraph beginning on Page 5, Line 13 as follows:

The shape of the damping insert need not be circular like the discs 88 shown in Fig. 5, but may have other shapes such as the rectangular damping insert 90 shown in Fig. 6. The stiffness of the discs can be tailored to meet the needs of the wheelchair user. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, a nylon disc having a diameter of approximately 1.0 inches, and a thickness of about 1.0 mm. Preferably, the disc is flat until it is deformed. It can be seen in Fig. 2 that even when the discs 88 are deformed by being positioned in the annular space between the spacer 66 and the housing 18, the major faces of the discs are still oriented substantially vertically. Also, preferably, the deformation is an elastic deformation. It has been observed that the problem of caster wheel fluttering is more likely to occur in situations where the wheelchair user is relatively light weight. Therefore, the damping inserts, such as the discs 88, can be replaced with damping inserts of greater or lesser stiffness to accommodate the needs of the wheelchair user. It can be seen that by removing the cap 76 from the housing 18, the damping inserts are readily removable and replaceable.

Amend the paragraph beginning on Page 6, Line 12 as follows:

Although a caster fork 144 is shown in the embodiments of the invention disclosed so far, it is to be understood that ~~the~~ any suitable type of caster mounting assembly can be used. For example, as shown in Figs. 8 and 9, a caster assembly 140 can be made using a caster mounting assembly 142 that merely includes a single-pronged leg 144. All the other elements of the caster wheel assembly 140 are substantially similar to those elements described thus far.